## UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

TECH-TRONIX, INC.,

CASE NO.

Judge Magistrate 03 - 2013 1

Plaintiff.

VS.

DENNY HECKER AUTO GROUP, a Minnesota corporation, MICHAEL MILLER, MICHAEL NICHOLS, NICHOLS MEDIA CONSULTANTS, Inc., a South Dakota corporation,

Defendants.

## COMPLAINT

Plaintiff, Tech-Tronix, Inc., an Antigua corporation, by and through its undersigned attorneys, hereby files its complaint against Defendants, Denny Hecker Auto Group, a Minnesota corporation, Michael Miller, Michael Nichols and Nichols Media Consultants, Inc. and alleges:

#### **PARTIES**

- 1. Plaintiff, Tech Tronix, is a corporation organized under the laws of Antigua, and maintains its principal office in Miami-Dade County, Florida.
- 2. Defendant, Denny Hecker Auto Group, is upon information and belief, a corporation licensed under the laws of Minnesota and is conducting business in the State of Minnesota and conducted business with Tech-Tronix in the State of Florida.



- 3. Defendant, Michael Miller, is an individual and upon information and belief, is a resident of the State of Minnesota and at all times material hereto, conducted business with Tech Tronix in Miami-Dade County, Florida.
- 4. Defendant, Nichols Media Consultants, Inc. is, upon information and belief, a South Dakota corporation and at all times material hereto, unlawfully reproduced copyrighted material and further conducted business with the Denny Hecker Auto Group.
- 5. Defendant, Michael Nichols, is an individual who, upon information and belief, unlawfully reproduced copyrighted material and further conducted business with the Denny Hecker Auto Group.
- 6. Plaintiff, Tech Tronix, and Defendants Denny Hecker and Miller, are citizens of different states, Florida and Minnesota respectively and Defendant Michael Nichols and Nichols Media Consultants, Inc. are citizens of South Dakota.

## JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 7. This court has original jurisdiction of the action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. Section 1333 (8) inasmuch as it is a civil action arising under the United States Copyright Act, United States Code Title 17, Sections 101 et. seq., in a breach of an agreement consenting the jurisdiction in United States District Court, Southern District of Florida.
- 8. Venue is proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. Section 1391 inasmuch as Defendants have transacted business with the Plaintiff in the State of Florida and the acts and omissions of Defendant occurred in the State of Florida in this district, together with the agreement executed by Michael Miller consenting to venue in the United States District Court, Southern District of Florida.

#### **GENERAL ALLEGATIONS**

- 9. Plaintiff is engaged in the business of producing informational audio/video taped commercials related to the sale and credit sales of automobiles under the trade name "Tech-Tronix." It is the lawful assignee and licensee of the copyrighted material that is the subject matter of this action. On or about February 10, 1997, Plaintiff as assignee of Rachelle Sanborn, complied, in all respects, with the copyright laws of the United States and all other laws thereof governing copyrights and secured the exclusive rights and privileges in and to the informational commercial ("infomercial") identified as the Auto Credit 2000 Infomercial.
- 10. Plaintiff, as assignee of Rachelle Sanborn, received from the Register of Copyrights, a Certificate of Registration dated effective February 10, 1997 and attached hereto and incorporated herein as Exhibit "A." Plaintiff has been and still is the proprietor of all rights, title and interest in and to the above copyright.
- 11. On or about October 19, 1998, Plaintiff, as assignee of Rachelle Sanborn, complied, in all respects, with the copyright laws of the United States and all other laws thereof governing copyrights, and secured the exclusive rights and privileges in and to the infomercial identified as "National Credit Drive."
- 12. Plaintiff, as assignee of Rachelle Sanborn, received from the Register of Copyrights a Certificate of Registration, with an effective date of October 19, 1998 and attached hereto and incorporated herein as Exhibit "B." Plaintiff has been and still is the proprietor of all rights, title and interest in and to the above copyright.
- 13. The infomercials identified above contain a large amount of material wholly original with the Plaintiff, which includes video production and written scripts for

text. At all times material hereto, the Auto Credit 2000 infomercial has been published, broadcast and telecast on behalf of Plaintiff's customers throughout the United States.

- 14. Since October 19, 1998 and at all times material hereto, Plaintiff has published, broadcast and telecast the infomercial "National Credit Drive" for its customers throughout the United States. Since October 19, 1998, Plaintiff has been and still is the sole proprietor of all rights, title and interest in and to the copyright for the infomercial "National Credit Drive."
- 15. On or about July 18, 1998, Michael Miller, individually and as authorized agent of Denny Hecker Auto Group, entered into an agreement with Plaintiff d/b/a Tech-Tronix, Inc., for the use and production of the National Credit Drive infomercial to be broadcast through Minneapolis, Minnesota television market.
- 16. After October 19, 1998, Defendants Michael Miller, Denny Hecker Auto Group, Michael Nichols and Nichols Media Consultants, Inc. infringed the copyright held by Plaintiff producing, broadcasting and telecasting upon the United States national media market an infomercial identical to the National Credit Drive infomercial entitled "Keys to Financial Freedom." A copy of the Plaintiff's copyright National Credit Drive infomercial is attached hereto and incorporated herein as Exhibit "1." A copy of the Defendants infringing infomercial entitled "Keys to Financial Freedom" is attached hereto and incorporated herein as Exhibit "2." Both exhibits are in VHS format.
- 17. Plaintiff discovered the violations on or about February 10, 2000. Prior to the commencement of this action, Plaintiff notified Defendants that Defendants have infringed the copyright of the Plaintiff. A copy of Plaintiff's demand dated April 14,

2000 is attached hereto and incorporated herein as Exhibit "C." Despite demand, Defendants have failed and refused to cease and desist infringing on the copyright.

- 18. At all times material hereto, and continuously since through the present date, Defendants have been producing, selling, marketing, broadcasting and telecasting its infomercials patterned after the copyrighted National Credit Drive, all in violation of Plaintiff's copyright.
- 19. Plaintiff has performed all conditions precedent and necessary for the maintenance of this action.
- 20. Plaintiff has retained the undersigned attorneys to represent it in this matter and is entitled to reimbursement of its attorney fees and costs pursuant to 17 U.S.C. Section 101 et. seq.

## COUNT I – INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

- 21. This is an action to enjoin infringement of a copyright.
- 22. Plaintiff readopts and realleges its allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 20 above as though fully set forth herein.
- 23. At all times material hereto, Defendants had produced, sold, marketed, broadcast and telecast infomercials reproduced largely from Plaintiff's copyrighted infomercial known as "National Credit Drive" and "Auto Credit 2000."
- 24. As a result of the acts and omissions of the Defendants herein, Plaintiff has suffered and will continue to suffer irreparable harm and damage.

#### WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands:

a. That Defendants, agents and representatives, be enjoined during the pendancy of this action and permanently from infringing the copyright of Plaintiff in

any manner and from publishing, producing, selling, marketing, telecasting, broadcasting or otherwise disposing of any copies of the infomercials known as the "Keys Financial Freedom" or other infomercials similarly produced and marketed;

- b. That Defendants be required to pay Plaintiff such damages that Plaintiff has sustained in consequence of Defendants' infringement of copyright;
- c. That Defendants account for all gains, profits and advantages derived by Defendants by their infringement of Plaintiff's copyright, or such other damages that the court deems just and proper in the provisions of the United States copyright laws, but not less than \$100,000.00;
- d. Defendants be required to deliver all copies of infomercials in their possession or under their control infringing the copyright, including but not limited to all customer lists that have been sold said infomercials;
- e. That the Defendants pay Plaintiff its costs of this action and reasonable attorney fees; and
  - f. Any other relief that this court deems just and proper.

#### **COUNT II – UNFAIR COMPETITION DAMAGES**

- 25. This is a cause of action for damages in excess of \$100,000.00.
- 26. Plaintiff reavers and realleges its allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 6 above as though fully rewritten herein.
- 27. Prior to 1997, Plaintiff went to great expense and effort in developing and designing infomercials entitled "Auto Credit 2000" and "National Credit Drive."

6

- 28. These infomercials created, written and produced by the Plaintiff, create a unique opportunity for automobile dealers and trades people to sell and market automobiles to consumers to be sold on credit.
- 29. Plaintiff has produced and sold its copyrighted infomercials, which has specifically adapted to the name and location of the dealer, but in all other respects filed the same format identity and marketing pattern copyrighted by Plaintiff. Since 1997, Plaintiff developed a strong national base of customers inasmuch as its copyrighted infomercials greatly aid in the sale of automobiles to consumers using credit.
- 30. As a result of Plaintiff's expenditure of money, skill and efforts in the development of its copyrighted infomercials, Plaintiff's infomercials have acquired a substantial market value in the infomercial and automobile trade.
- 31. Defendants' copy of the copyrighted design as identified in Exhibit "1" attached hereto and incorporated herein, is unmistakably from Plaintiff's infomercial attached hereto and incorporated herein as Exhibit "2."
- 32. Defendants, by their acts, have taken advantage of the knowledge and skill of the Plaintiff and the good will developed by Plaintiff and have capitalized on the market created by Plaintiff for its infomercials.
- 33. By copying and offering either at no cost demo or for sale its copy of the copyrighted infomercials, at the very same time Plaintiff was selling its original infomercials, Defendants have created and taken advantage of the confusion of the infomercials in the trade and in the public mind to reach profit at the Plaintiff's damage.
- 34. The acts of Defendants in publishing, producing, marketing, telecasting and broadcasting largely similar infomercials of the Plaintiff's copyrighted infomercial,

7

constitutes an equitable conduct, unfair trade practices and unfair competition and that Defendants have misappropriated Plaintiff's good will and the benefits of Plaintiff's skill and expenditures in the development and promotion of the distinctive infomercials. Consequently, Defendants have caused Plaintiff damages and said damages will continue so long as Defendants continue to market the copied infomercials.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands that this court enter a judgment for damages against Defendants for each copyright violation pursuant to 17 USC Section 101, et seq, and other applicable laws, costs of this action and reasonable attorney fees, and for such other and further relief that this court deems just and proper.

#### COUNT III – ACCOUNTING

- 35. This is an action for an accounting.
- 36. Plaintiff realleges and reavers its allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 6 as though fully rewritten herein.
- 37. Defendants have produced, sold and marketed infomercials copies from the Plaintiff's copyrighted infomercials known as Auto Credit 2000 and National Credit Drive, causing Plaintiff damages.
- 38. For every violation of the copyright by Defendants, Plaintiff is entitled to damages including but not limited to lost profits, loss of good will, diminution of value, dilution and over-saturation of the copyrighted design in the trade.
- 39. Pursuant to United States copyright laws and a result of the acts and omissions of the Defendants, Plaintiff is entitled to know of each and every violation and of all sales currently infringing infomercials performed by the Defendants. Defendants have never rendered a complete accounting of the violations that have occurred nor of the

sales or the delivery of free copies of infringing infomercials performed by Defendants.

Plaintiff has no adequate remedy at law governing an accounting.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment as follows:

- a. Defendants be directed to account to Plaintiff for all funds and property received by Defendants related to the sale of infringing infomercials;
- b. Defendants be required to account for all of its acts and doings in connection with the production of infringing infomercials;
- c. Plaintiff have judgment against the Defendants jointly and severally for any sum or balance found to be due from Defendants; and
- d. Plaintiff be granted such other and further relief that this court deems just and proper.

Dated: January 1, 2003.

Michael W. Simon, Esq. Florida Bar No. 776394 Simon Sigalos & Spyredes

120 E. Palmetto Park Road, Suite 100

Boca Raton, Florida 33432

(561) 447-0017

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PHONE NO. : 305 668 9262

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This Certificate issued under the seal of the Copyright Office in accordance with title 17. United States Code. attests that registration has been made for the work identified below. The information on this certificate has been made a part of the Copyright Office records.

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This Certificate issued under the seal of the Copyright Office in accordance with title 17. United States Code. attests that registration has been made for the work identified below. The information on this certificate has been made a part of the Copyright Office records.

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Case 1:03-cv-20134-PAS Document 1 Entered on FLSD Docket 01/23/2003 Page 13 of 16 FROM : Christopher Ad Group PHONE NO. : 305 668 9262 Apr. 26 2000 01:53PM P6 EXAMINED ... FORM PA MATT CHECKED BY FOR CORRESPONDENCE COPYRIGHT OFFICE USE ONLY DO NOT WRITE ABOVE THIS LINE. IF YOU HEED MORE SPACE, USE A SEPARATE CONTINUATION SLIEET. PREVIOUS RECISTRATION Has registration for this work, or for an earlier version of this work, already been made in the Copyright Office? \_¹ Yes — XNo — If your answer is "Yes," why is another registration being sought? (Check appropriate box) ▼ This is the first published edition of a work proviously registered in unpublished form. is 1.1 This is the first application submitted by this author as copyright claimant. c. This is a changed version of the work, as shown by space 6 on this application. If your answer is "Yes," give: Previous Registration Number \* Year of Registration Y DERIVATIVE WORK OR COMPILATION Complete both space 6a & 6b for a derivative work; complete only 6b for a compilation. Proexisting Material Identify any proexisting work or works that this work is based on or incorporates. belore comp Material Added to This Work. Give a brief, general statement of the material that has been added to this work and in which copyright is claimed. DEPOSIT ACCOUNT If the registration fee is to be charged to a Deposit Account established in the Copyright Office, give name and number of Account **802**80 Name V Account Number V CORRESPONDENCE. Give name and address to which correspondence about this application should be sent. Name address Addr Robert M. Downey, Esq. ROBERT M. DOWNEY, 701 Brickeli Avenue, د. وابا. give your daylane on Miami, Florida 33131 A WINDA Area Code 4 Telifonone Number ▶ (305) A transported by the contraction descriptions on the Park Market on the Park Town of the Contraction of the Park Town of the Park CERTIFICATION\* I, the undersigned, hereby certify that I am the Check only one ▼ C author Costor copyright claimant Li owner of ouclusive right(s) Rachelle Sanhorn Lio in the texts of the Kill of the work identified in this application and that the statements made by me in this application are correct to the best of my knowledge. Typed or printed name and date 🔻 If this application gives a date of publication in space 2, do not sign and submit it before that date. Robert Downey Handweitten signatuu 58480-8927211-X191-3 Complete of necessary Coopers
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MICHAEL W. SIMON GEORGE L. SIGALOS ANASTASIOS TOM SPYREDES

TELEPHONE (561) 447-0017 FACSIMILE (561) 447-0018

April 14, 2000

# VIA CERTIFIED MAIL RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED and VIA REGULAR U.S. MAIL

Denny Hecker Group Corporate

Attn: Denny Hecker 500 Ford Road

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55426

Automotive Credit Superstore

Attn: Michael Miller 2767 Long Lake Road

Roseville, Minnesota 55113

#### NOTICE TO CEASE and DESIST FROM VIOLATION OF COPYRIGHT

Dear Mr. Hecker and Mr. Miller:

This firm has been retained by Tech-Tronix, Inc., ("Tech-Tronix") with regard to its rights to protect its trademarks, service marks and copyrighting materials.

As you should know, Tech-Tronix owns the right to an informational commercial entitled "National Credit Drive." This work contains a large amount of wholly original material and is copyrighted subject matter under Title 17 of the United States Code. Tech-Tronix complies in all respects with the laws governing copyright and has secured exclusive rights and privileges in and to the copyright of said work. The material is proprietary to Tech-Tronix and protected under the United States copyright laws.

It is understood that you, individually or in conjunction with other persons or entities, infringed on copyright by producing and broadcasting a very similar version of the National Credit Drive entitled "The Keys to Financial Freedom."

In addition, it is also demanded that you immediately CEASE and DESIST from any further production, broadcasting and use of our clients' National Credit Drive or Keys to Financial Freedom informational commercials until payment for the outstanding commissions is received and an agreement regarding placement of media by Christopher Ad Group ("CAG") in the future is executed.



Denny Hecker Michael Miller Page Two

If you comply with the foregoing demands, we will consider the matter resolved and a business relationship with our clients in the future will be possible. Otherwise, our clients will move to institute litigation against you to obtain relief from your unlawful activities. Relief that shall be sought will be in the form of a preliminary injunction enjoining you, and all those in association with you, from continuing infringement. In addition, our clients will seek recovery of all costs incurred as a result of such litigation, and compensation for damages, along with an award of attorney fees. Criminal prosecution under U.S. Copyright Law may also be applicable.

We anticipate your immediate compliance and await your response.

PLEASE GOVERN YOURSELF ACCORDINGEY.

Very truly yours,

Michael W. Simon

#### MWS:smm

cc: Tech-Tronix, Inc.

Christopher Ad Group

Denny Hecker Group Corporate

Mike Nichols - Nichols Advertising

Michael Miller - Auto Credit Superstee

KMSP - Channel 9 - General Manager

WCCO - Channel 4 - General Manager

WFTC - Channel 29 - General Manager

KARE - Channel 11 - General Manager

KCCO - Channel 7 - General Manager

KMWB - Channel 23 - General Manager

KPXM - Channel 41 - General Manager

KSTP - Channel 5 - General Manager

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	ADDRESS, AND TELEPHONE NUMBER)	······································	ATTORNEYS (IF KNOWN)	HAIND	STPAUDGE
Michael W. Simo				OF C	
Simon Sigalos & 120 East Palmett	o Park Rd., Suite 100,		<u> </u>	<u> </u>	2
(a)BOLEGE ESPENTA MARTENE	ACTION AND ET DADE, MONROE, BROWARD	D. PALME	BEACH, MARTIN, ST. LUCIE,	. INDIAN RIVER, OKEECHOBE	E HIGHLANDS
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (PLACE AN "X" IN ONE BOX ONLY)		or Diversity Cases Only)		CE AN X' IN ONE BOX FOR PLAINTIFF ONE BOX FOR DEFENDANT)
□ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)	Ci	itizen of This State		Principal Place 4 04
□ 2 U.S. Government Defendant	Oiversity     (Indicate Citizenship of Parties)	Ci	itizen of Another State   □	2 CT2 Incorporated ar	nd Principal Place 1 5 55 n Another State
	in Item III)		itizen or Subject of a	3 🗆 3 Foreign Nation	; □6
IV. ORIGIN	(PLACE AI		ONE BOX ONLY)		Appeal to District
	noved from 🗀 3 Remanded from 🗀 4 e Court Appellate Court	Reinstati Reopeni			Judge from  7 Magistrate  Judgment
V. NATURE OF SUIT	(PLACE AN "X" IN ONE BOX ONLY)				
A CONTRACT	A TORTS		FORFEITURE/PENALTY	A BANKRUPTCY	A OTHER STATUTES
☐ 110 Insurance ☐ 120 Vanne ☐ 130 Miller Act ☐ 140 Negotiable Instrument ☐ 150 Recovery of Overpayment A Enforcement of Judgment ☐ 151 Medicare Act ☐ 152 Pacovery of Defaulted Student Loans ☐ KCI Veterans.	PERSONAL INJURY  310 Airpiane Product Liability  320 Assault Libel & Signeder  3310 Airpiane Product Liability  3420 Assault Libel & Signeder  3330 Federal Emoloyers Liability  340 Manne  340 Manne  3470 Ciner Fraud	y - ctice y - lity (8 sonal t Liability (9 PERTY	8   510 Agnoulture 8   620 Other Food & Drug 8   625 Drug Related Selzure of Property 21 USC 381 8   630 Liquor Laws 9   640 R A & Truck 9   650 Airline Regs 6   660 Occupational Safety/Health 6   690 Other	2422 Appeal 28 USC 158 28 USC 157  A PROPERTY RIGHTS  \$20 Copyrights 28 30 Patient 2840 Trademark	□ 400 State Reapportonment □ 410 Antitrust □ 430 Banks and Bankong □ 450 Commerce-ICC Patesvetc □ 460 Deportation □ 470 Racketeer Influenced and Comupt Organizations □ 810 Selective Service □ 850 Securities Commodifies/
☐ 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits	Liability 371 Truth in Lendi	ng 🔄	A LABOR	B SOCIAL SECURITY	☐ 875 Customer Challenge 12 USC 3410
☐ 160 Stockholders Suits ☐ 190 Other Contract	☐ 355 Motor Venicle Property Dam Product Liachit, ☐ 385 Property Dam	age [	☐ 710 Fair Labor Standards	_ 861 -HA -1395#;	☐ 891 Agricultural Acts ☐ 892 Economic Stapilitation Act
195 Contract Product Liability	☐ 360 Other Personal Injury Product Dabi		Act  720 Labor Mgmt Relations	☐ 862 Black Lung (922 ☐ 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g))	☐ 893 Environmental Matters ☐ 894 Energy Allocation Act
A REAL PROPERTY	A CIVIL RIGHTS PRISONER PET		☐ 730 Labor/Mgmt Reporting	: 3 864 SSID Title XVI : 3 865 RSI (405(g))	2 895 Freedom of information Act
210 Land Condemnation 220 Foreclosure	441 Voting B 510 Motions to Va 5442 Employment Sentence HABEAS CORPU		∆ Disclosure Act     ☐ 740 Railway Labor Act	FEDERAL TAX SUITS	900 Appeal of Fee Determination Under Equal Access to Justice
	Accommodations  444 Welfare		790 Other Labor Litigation	A☐ 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff;	☐ 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes
☐ 290 All Other Real Property	□ 440 Otner Civil Rights 8□ 540 Mandamus & 8□ 550 Civil Rights 8□ 555 Phson Condi	1.	A C 791 Empl. Ret. Inc. Security Act	or Defendant) A⊆ 871 :RS — Third Pa⊏: 26 USC 7609	☐ 890 Other Statutory Actions A OR B
VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO	N ICITE THE U.S CIVIL STATUTE UNDER WHICH Y DO NOT CITE JURISDICTIONAL STATUTES UNLI SC (33% 8) Title MAKEGES, a CLOUNI, My 4	OU ARE FILL ESS DIVERS	USC Copyo	<del></del>	is and
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACT	ION	DEMAND \$ ( DD)	COO CHECK YES ON	ly if demanded in complaint.  ID:
VIII.RELATED CASE(	S) (See instructions): JUDGE			DOCKET NUMBER	
DATE /	SIGNATURE OF	ATTORN	NEY OF RECORD		TO! **
5/15/02				Milwell SI	uon 176394
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	AMOUNT 150 - APPLYING IFP		B 1	· Cooperation : No	BANdstRX
RECEIPT # 11/5 83	AMOUNT APPLYING IFP_		JUDGE Seit	<u> </u>	DANSUS TILA